



Special Points of Interest:

Recruitment and Retention
Husband and Wife Team
Playing Cards
Personnel Changes
Websites

Voluntary Service

Five Ways...

Do you have a project that requires special technical expertise? Here are five ways to find those volunteers who possess those special attributes:

1. Contact a national volunteer matching program such as www.volunteermatch.com or www.techsoup.org for technical volunteers. Many cities also have similar programs that do volunteer matching. (New York and Seattle are two cities with such programs.)
2. Get permission to put a notice on a bulletin board or included in an in-house newsletter at a local high-tech company.
3. Check with computer science teachers at local high school, colleges or technical schools for qualified students who may want some actual experience designing websites and working on similar projects.
4. Contact engineering organizations on those campuses and ask them to make an announcement at one of their meetings about your need for volunteers.
5. Look for meetings of computer societies or clubs in your area and contact them about how to find technical volunteers.

Husband & Wife as Volunteers

For Arthur and George Wheeler, the past 19 years have been filled with volunteering at the VA hospital in Gainesville, Florida. The Keystone Heights husband and wife have more than 10,000 hours each.

It all began in the 1980's. The Wheelers had an appliance repair business for several decades. Then Arthur had a heart attack and found himself as a patient in the VA hospital.

The couple said there were two factors that motivated them to be volunteers. They saw a need for volunteers and they wanted to give something back for the care Mr. Wheeler had received while a patient there.

But they admit they never expected to become so involved or to end up nearly 20 years later spending so much time on that mission. Besides their regular volunteer work at the VA hospital, Mr. Wheeler is Representative for the American Legion and George Wheeler, his wife, is Representative for the American Legion Auxiliary, and have held those positions for ten years.

Mrs. Wheeler said their duties have expanded since they began volunteering. Her husband is responsible for calling on all the new veterans in the hospital, which averages 30 – 45 new patients a day. The couple also oversee the disbursement of donated equipment, items and funds, and George recently started a project to provide new clothes for homeless veterans.



They (homeless veterans) come in with nothing. They put them in pajamas and the clothes they wear cannot even be washed," George said.

The Wheelers arrive at the Gainesville hospital at 6:00 a.m. each Tuesday and Thursday. They want to beat the traffic and get a good parking spot. They usually call it a day by 2 or 3 and they help with any special events at the hospital. In October, they will assist with the Fall Festival for patients and staff.

The Wheelers said there are now about 600 volunteers at the hospital, and they said it's difficult for most people to comprehend how extensive the work of the volunteers is at the VA Hospitals. The Wheelers are top cheerleaders when it comes to the care patients receive at the hospital, particularly since Arthur Wheeler has been in the hospital on several occasions as a patient, including one stay where he had open heart surgery.

"They do wonders over there. You just don't realize until you have been a patient. They are the most caring people I've seen." Wheeler said.

Wheeler, who says he is "going on 87," saw combat in the Pacific during World War II while he was in the Navy.

"The war was over in September and I got out in November 1945," said Wheeler.

Besides doing their volunteer work at the VA hospital, the Wheelers are active in the American Legion where they run the Wednesday night bingo games. Arthur Wheeler is the financial officer for the organization and George Wheeler serves as treasurer for the Auxiliary.

But their volunteer work does not stop there. George Wheeler also serves as a poll worker during county and national elections.

The Wheeler's volunteer work was noticed recently by Keystone Heights officials. Mayor Archie Green said the council passed a resolution recognizing the Wheelers for having logged more than 10,000 hours each at the hospital.

Green said the Wheelers are an asset to the community in many ways.

"I wish we had more people like them. I knew they were involved in American Legion, but I didn't know about them giving all those hours to the VA hospital until it was brought to our attention, so it was news for me too," Green said.

Arthur Wheeler said that volunteering is a two-way street and the gets as much out of it as he gives.

"It's real rewarding. The more you're over there the more you want to be over there," Wheeler said.

George Wheeler said it just makes you feel good. "You may have all your aches and pains or feel bad when you go in there, but you soon realize you can't complain," she said.

The Wheelers have no plans to retire from their volunteer work. In fact, Arthur Wheeler can't imagine what it would be like not to be a volunteer at the hospital.

"I get a lot out of it. I would hate to think a time would come when I couldn't get over there," he said.

(Story by Anne Sponholtz, The Florida Times-Union, 12/26/2001.)

Need Motivational Quotes?

Could your volunteers benefit from some words of encouragement? Need to light a fire under some longtime workers? These websites offer free motivational quotes:

www.motivational-quotes.com

www.motivateus.com

www.sperience.com/motivation

www.quotationspage.com

(Taken from The Volunteer Management Report)

Important Words

Many times just a simple word or two will be enough to achieve more. Here are some words that should be used

frequently by every professional who works with volunteers.

- * Thank you.
- * You did a great job!
- * What's your opinion?
- * Please.

Least important word to use: I.

(The Volunteer Management Report)

Playing Cards

Mr. Bob Armstrong with the Masonic Lodge #7, Virginia city, NV, is offering playing cards for your patients. If anyone is interested in receiving cards, please send your request to the following address:

Mr. Bob Armstrong
P. O. Box 788
Virginia City, NV 89440

Personnel Changes

Ann Benois has joined the staff as Volunteer Program Manager at Salem, VA.

Susan DeSalvo has been selected as the Volunteer Program Manager in Bath, NY.

We want to wish *Bob Marling*, Topeka, KS, a fond farewell. Bob retired in December. We wish you the best for the future.

We're on the Web!

Internet - www.va.gov/volunteer
Intranet - vawww.va.gov/volunteer

Getting the Word Out

Jodi Wade, VAVS National Representative, I.B.P.O. Elks of the World, Inc., has taken on the task of distributing "Faces of a Grateful Nation" to the libraries in the community of Pine Bluff, AR. What an

innovative idea. Thanks Jodi...keep up the good work!

If others would like additional copies of FACES, they are available. If you would like to make a distribution in your community or within your organization, please contact the Voluntary Service Office at 202.273.8952.

Just a Reminder...

Unfortunately, our office continues to receive complaints regarding the mailing of facilities' VAVS minutes and Annual Joint Reviews to the current VAVS National Representative.

Please assure that your offices are not using the old VISTA labels and are using the labels which are being forwarded to you each month.

The staff here in Central Office are making every attempt to get current and correct information to your offices.

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Reflection

VAVS Service Priorities for 2001 – 2001:

- * Recruitment and Retention
- * Business/Corporate Involvement
- * Training for Staff who Utilize Volunteers

Calendar

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, February 10 – 16, 2002.

VISN Liaison's Conference Call,
February 6, 2002.

VAVS Conference Call, February 12, 2002.

National Salute Summary Reports due in VACO not later than the 10th workday (March 14, 2002).